



EFFECTIVENESS OF METHODS AND TECHNIQUES ON STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Dr. Ajay Kumar Swain

O.E. S-II, Senior Teacher Educator, DIET, Cuttack, Narasinghpur, Odisha, India.

ABSTRACT

This paper reflects the problems of Elementary School students pertinent to learning second language 'English'. Basically, they face the problems on reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing. So the researchers selected a topic of class-V text book prepared by TE and SCERT, School & Mass Education department, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar. It is meant for acquiring skills of reading comprehension, vocabulary and writing. Objectives of the study were to develop innovative teaching learning strategies to enhance the learning competencies of learners, to select appropriate methods, techniques and teaching learning materials for effective class room transaction and to study the impact of the administered strategies on achievement of the learners. For this experiment, 50 students of class-V were selected. It was a single group pre-test and post-test design. Pre-achievement test, post-achievement test, work sheets and observation schedules were used as tools. Intervention was extended for a period of one month. Various techniques like Brain Storming, Visual Memory Development, Chain Drill and TPR were used in the activities during intervention programme. The activities like fill in the blanks, dialogue practice, demonstration on pronunciation, word chains, cross-word puzzle, sentence writing from diagram etc were undertaken. Here 't' test was used to analyze and interpret the collected data. It was found that there was significant difference as the level of significance was 0.01. Thus the intervention activities were effective.

KEY WORDS: Effect, Activity, Achievement, vocabulary, Investigator, Pre-test, Post-test and English.

INTRODUCTION:

Language learning takes place in meaningful context through plenty of exposure. Exposure means getting the desired language inputs through listening and reading. There is a little scope for our children to listen English at home or in their surroundings. Reading inside schools compensates the losses that have taken place due to lack of listening exposure in the target language i.e. English. Therefore, reading is the master key to the treasure house of English. Thus we have to train the children with the skills and sub-skills of reading.

We read something for getting information, pleasure and communication. For getting information, we may read newspapers, journals, authentic materials, dictionaries, encyclopedia, texts based on the required themes and many more. But for the purpose of enjoying pleasure, we may read comics, novels, short stories, poems etc. Whenever we read, we get the mental picture of what we read because the brain can never be isolated. We interact with the writer through the text in the absence of the writer during reading. The facts and ideas as presented and perceived by the writer make us visualize the same mentally and we begin to interact. This is true reading. We call it "Interactive reading". Good learners of reading acquire the following skill and sub-skills of reading:

- Factual comprehension- Understand the facts given in the text.
- Global comprehension- Understand the text as a whole i.e. summing of and skimming.
- Prediction- Predict what would happen next, what would be in the next paragraph.
- Guessing – Guess the meaning of a new words and phrases using in the given context.
- Scanning – Quickly go through a passage to locate information.
- Evaluation – Evaluate characters, objects and other in the text.
- Judgment – Giving judgment on the attitude of the tone and attitude of the writer.
- Inference – Infer new information based on their experimental orbit and background knowledge.
- Critical thinking – Thinking critically and give their own opinion, feeling and react on the text.

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES:

Ayeni (2011), teaching is a continuous process that involves bringing about desirable changes in learners through use of appropriate methods. Adunola (2011), indicated that in order to bring desirable changes in students, teaching methods used by educators should be best for the subject matter. Bharadwaj & Pal (2011), sustained that teaching methods work effectively mainly if they suit

learners' needs since every learner interprets and responds to questions in a unique way. Zeeb (2004), alignment of teaching methods with students' needs and preferred learning influence students' academic attainments. Dixit (1995), conducted a study on the necessity of developing comprehension ability through the lessons of prescribed textbooks with a reference to titles. It was revealed that the role of the background knowledge in encoding materials helps better understanding of the topics. Ganguly and Ganguly (1996), studied on the use language strategies like questioning, paraphrasing in the textbooks, dictating model answers and pattern drills in English and found that they are essential in teaching English. The finding was significant in our context because it brings to the need for using different strategies for first and second language. Trimen (1993), conducted a study on the spellings of first grade children. He stated that invented spelling by a child will help his/her teacher to make a good guess about the child's misspell. This guess purportedly will satisfactorily "determine what helps the child's needs in order to spell better.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:

English, the 2nd language cannot draw learners closer to it. Reading not only concentrates to symbol, sound and sense but goes beyond that where scaffold reading counts much. So there is a need of promoting reading habit among the learners at elementary level. It can pave the way to make them autonomous. During the interaction of the researcher with the students of the classroom, he felt that the thirst of reading of the learners must be quenched through children's magazine, comics, story books etc. But prior to that there is a necessity to bring them to that level by acquainting them with the techniques so that they will be inspired to read more and more. Comprehension is nucleus whatever learners read. Unless and until learners' level of comprehension is enhanced, the entire effort will end in smoke. Therefore, classroom is real laboratory to administer experiments applying appropriate reading strategies to realize the objectives. On the above premise the researcher decided to undertake the study entitled "Effectiveness of Methods and Techniques on Students' Achievement in English at Elementary Level".

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The study aimed at the following objectives:

- (i) To develop Innovative Teaching Learning Strategies to enhance the learning Competencies of Learners.
- (ii) To select appropriate Methods, Techniques and Teaching Learning Materials for effective class room transaction.
- (iii) To study the Impact of the administered Strategies on Achievement of the Learners.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY:

The post-test score will differ significantly from the pre-test at the end of the experiments.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

The study was a descriptive survey-cum-experiment approach.

- **Sample:** The sample consisted of 50 learners of Class-V of the adopted primary school of District Institute of Education and Training, Cuttack at Narasinghpur in Cuttack district.
- **Design:** It was a single group pre-test and post-test design.
- **Tools used:** Pre-achievement test, post-achievement test, worksheet and observation schedules were used in this study.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED:

To analyze and interpret the collected data 't' test was computed for finding out significant difference of mean scores between Pre-Test and Post-Test.

PROCEDURE OF THE EXPERIMENT:

Step-I: Before intervention, a teacher made pre-test was administered on the learners in order to know where they stood in respect of reading, mostly pertaining to reading comprehension, vocabulary and writing skills. Thus the pre-test consisted of 10 items comprising 30 marks. Some of the items were objective type in nature and some were of short answer types. The time allocation for the administration of the test was only 30 minutes.

Step-II: After assessing the needs of the learners on the basis of the pre-test, teaching learning strategies were formulated which included: blackboard texts, Rhymes and TPR lessons and model lessons using; classroom questioning skills, comprehension skills, visual memory development techniques, mental talk etc.

Step-III: After four weeks of intervention, a teacher made post-test was administered. The result of the pre-test was compared with the result of the post-test and basing on the results, findings arrived in relation to objectives.

PREPARATORY AND TRANSACTIONAL PROCESS:

- (i) Selection of the Topic:** A prose topic entitled "The Frog and the Crow" was chosen for the learners of class-V in Odia medium school of our state, Odisha. It is the 4th topic in the course book "My English Book" prepared by the Department of School and Mass Education, Government of Odisha.
- (ii) Content Analysis:** On the basis of used vocabulary, main idea and supporting ideas.
- (iii) Mode of Interaction:** Learners have to work whole class mode, in pairs, in groups and individually.

Content Analysis of the topic "The Frog and the Crow"

Main idea	Supporting Details	Vocabulary
The topic "The Frog and the Crow" is about a frog and its proudness. On day it met a crow and asked three questions. The crow caught its neck and flew away.	SGP-1 i. Introduction to the Frog and pond. ii. Proudness of the Frog as it lives both in water and on land. It can jump and walk. SGP-2 i. The frog can croak but neither the animals nor the fishes. ii. Met a crow and died due to its proudness.	Active Vocabulary pond, proud, summer, inside, outside, swim, walk, voice, nearby, breath, etc.

REFLECTION OF THE CLASSROOM TRANSACTION PROCESS:

The lesson "The Frog and the Crow" has two sense group paragraphs. The whole lesson was divided into three stages: Pre-reading, while reading and Post-reading.

- 1. Pre-reading:** This stage is meant for introducing the lesson to the learners so that they will be motivated to read the topic.
- 2. While reading:** This stage is meant for the learners to read aloud and then silently to understand the text. Since this is class-V and learners do not know how to read properly on their own, the teacher has to scaffold their reading. The researcher read the SGPs aloud for them. Then they listened and read the text silently on their own. Then the researcher asked them some comprehension questions and whenever necessary, the researcher gave them clues (it is in line number x, y and z in paragraph number 1 or 2 for example) so that they were able to answer.
- 3. Post-reading:** This stage compliments and supplements the understanding of the learners as they have to do some activities with minimum help of the teacher. They have to do the activities depending on the types and objectives. They have to work individually, in pairs or in groups or in whole class mode.

TRANSACTIONAL PROCESS:

- (a) Pre-reading stage:** The researchers asked the learners to read the name of the topic on page-40, look at the picture on page-40 (the picture of a Crow and Frog). They put the following questions:

Mode of interaction: whole class mode:

- (i) What do you see in the picture?
- (ii) What are they doing?
- (iii) Can you guess what the crow thinking?
- (iv) Can you guess what the Frog thinking?
- (v) Whether are they friends?

- (b) While-reading stage:** The researcher read aloud each SGP and asked learners to listen and read silently the same SGP. (The text is to be divided into two SGPs (Sense group paragraphs) SGP 1: Para 1 to 2, SGP2: Para3 to 4. He asked questions from the SGP following the principles of classroom questioning. Learners answer. They kept their books open and the teacher read paragraphs sentence by sentence, students repeat after him. He drew the following diagram on the blackboard and filled in the spaces with words and phrases eliciting from the students. Students consulted their texts and say aloud the answer.

Comprehension Questions: Whole class mode followed by a target individual learner. The investigator asked the following comprehension questions.

- i. Where did the frog live?
- ii. Where did it live in summer?
- iii. Where did it live in winter?
- iv. How did it feel in water?
- v. What made it proud?
- vi. Why did it feel sad for fishes?
- vii. How did it spend most of the time?
- viii. What was the Frog like?
- ix. What happened to its voice day by day?
- x. Who heard the frog singing in a sweet voice?
- xi. Whether the Frog asked questions to the crow?
- xii. What were those?
- xiii. What did the crow do with the frog?
- xiv. Who was really clever in this story?
- xv. What is the moral of this story?

After summing up the lesson at while-reading stage, the researcher switched up to post reading stage.

- (c) Post-reading Stage:** They were asked to identify the main idea and the supporting ideas closing their eyes (Key words and expressions) using their index finger. The researchers moved round the class to see whether they were able to do as were instructed to do. When some learners failed, the researchers asked them to reread the part in which the key expression asked occurs. This is how they used the technique of Visual Memory Development.

TRANSACTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- (i) Listen and fill in the blanks (Individual Work):** The researchers slowly read aloud the last paragraph. Learners listen to him. Then they filled in the blanks.
 - The crow said, "I can-----you like this Mr. Frog and-----away. And the crow ----- the ----- of the frog and flew away.
- (ii) Speaking:** The researchers made the learners practice the dialogues using

the steps given below:

- Rehearsal: The teacher read aloud the dialogue, learners listened. He read aloud one sentence, learners repeated after him.
- Teachers Vs Students. (Whole class Work)
- Students Vs Students. (Group Work)
- Two Students. (Pair Work)

(iii) **Pronunciation:** The researchers demonstrated pronunciation of different words. Learners in group practiced fast. Then individual learners were asked to pronounce the words.

(iv) **Vocabulary (a):** The learners were asked to read the last two paragraphs of the lesson. Then they were asked to sit in pairs and make word chains.

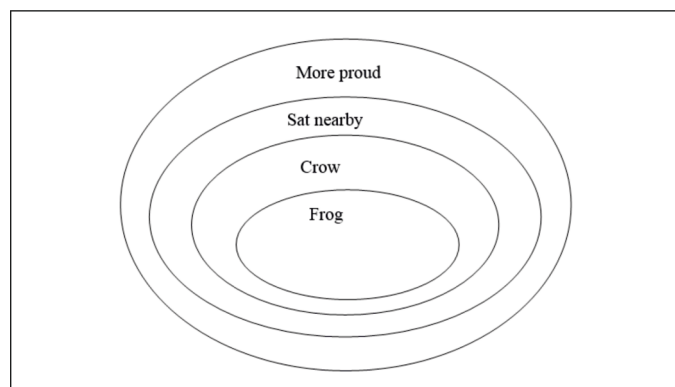
Example: Rat---, Ten ---, Neck

(v) **Vocabulary (b):** There are 6 words in the cross word puzzle related to the Frog and Crow. First one is done for you. Now do it. (Pair Work)

5.C			4.S		6.I
		1 C			
	3.J	R		2.P	
		O			
		A			
		K			

(vi) **Writing:**

(a) Look at the diagram and write four sentences in the space given. One sentence is done for you. (Pair Work)



- A Frog lived in a pond.
- _____.
- _____.
- _____.

(b) Now write the sentences as per the given example. (Individual work)

- Frog: Can you swim in water?
- Crow:
- Frog:
- Crow:
- Frog:
- Crow:

RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

Table-1

Table for Analysis and Interpretation of Results		
Tests	Numbers	Means
Pre-test	50	8.5
Post-test	50	19.7

It reveals from the above table that at the pre-test stage the mean score was 8.5. After Intervention was done for the learners, the post-test was raised to 19.7 which was better than pre-test.

Table-2

Post-test	N	MD	SD	SEMD	"t" Value	Remark
	50	11.2	5.04	1.008	11.1	Significant 0.01 level

N- Number of Sample, MD- Mean Difference, S.E.M.D (Standard Error of Mean of difference).

Since the problem is concerned with the significance of difference between two means obtained from the same test and administered to the same group on two occasions, the Researcher thought it appropriate to use "t"-value to determine the significance of mean difference between two tests i.e. pre-test and post-test. It is found that the obtained "t" value is 11.1 and significant at 0.01 level which is higher than the table value. Thus, undoubtedly the mean gain of the post-test is more than that of pre-test and stands significant. Therefore, the hypothesis stated, "The post-test score will differ significantly from the pre-test at the end of the experiments" is retained.

MAJOR FINDINGS:

It was revealed from the experiment that the learners' performance was found better in comparison to pre-test achievement mean score. The materials used during transaction were useful and helped learners to enhance their comprehension ability. They could overcome the spelling errors due to repeated practice through activities like word-chain, arranging jumbled letters, solving a word puzzle etc. activities pertaining to controlled writing helped them to write correct simple sentences based on the topic.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION:

Similar strategies can be developed by teachers to help learners to overcome the problems faced by them in relation to reading and comprehension. They can choose need-based materials to make the classroom transaction effective and meaningful. Peer assisted learning is rarely found in most of the schools and this paper shows how peer assisted learning can be useful developing reading comprehension, stating a guide to vocabulary and writing.

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